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## Phi Beta Kappa

Furman University

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of South Carolina's Dorchester State Park. Active in church work, she co-authored *The History of the First Baptist Church of Barnwell*, taught Sunday school at the Barnwell County Nursing Home for 21 years, and taught Vacation Bible School for 50 years. She was a past regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution, a horticulture and flower show master judge, and a noted lecturer on garden design and flower arranging. In 1987 she was recognized as Barnwell County's Outstanding Older American.

**Thornwell Wood Freeman** '38, May 18, Greenville. He was a veteran of World War II, was a retired school teacher and principal, and was the last surviving charter member of the Berea Lions Club.

**Hazel Altom Vance** '40, May 3, Greenville. She was a buyer for Meyers Arnold Department Store and retired from the store as department manager for jewelry and cosmetics.

**Frontis Keys Chandler** '41, March 29, Campobello, S.C. She was a former member of the Junior League of Greenville and was president of the Greenville YWCA for two years.

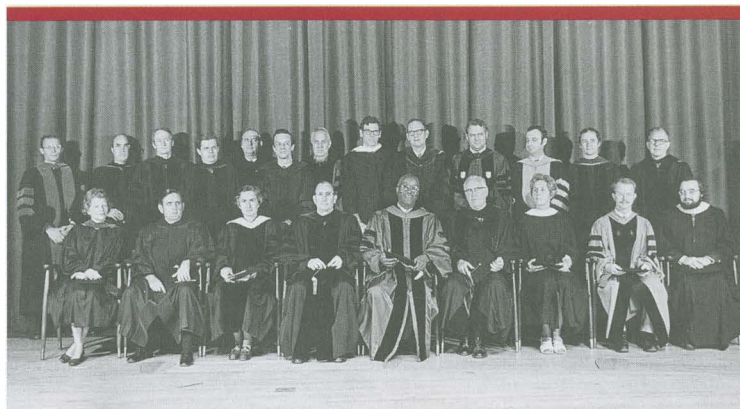
**George Morgan** '41, April, Winston-Salem, N.C.

**Raymond L. Pinson** '42, February 28, Gaffney, S.C. He was a minister.

**John Holman Hutto, Jr.** '43, January 30, James Island, S.C. He served as minister of music at Baptist churches in Louisiana and South Carolina and was a vocal coach at Charleston (S.C.) Southern University. He was an Army veteran of World War II.

**Jane Bland Earle Poole** '44, April 21, Greenville.

**Robert E. Christenberry** '45, February 27, Clemson, S.C. He was a Navy veteran and served aboard the USS Audubon at the Pacific Theater, after which he was employed by Milliken Company for a number of years. He later became director of planned giving at Furman and then at Clemson University, from which he retired in 1991. He was active in the Clemson Rotary



*December 5, 1973: Founding members of Furman's Gamma chapter of Phi Beta Kappa share the stage with John Hope Franklin (front, fifth from left), president of the United Chapters.*

## Phi Beta Kappa *The university's long quest paid off in 1973*

Furman's efforts to secure a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa took almost 50 years.

Phi Beta Kappa is considered the nation's most prestigious academic honorary society. Founded in 1776 at the College of William & Mary, the organization, which today has 262 chapters across the United States, has long been a leading advocate for the liberal arts and sciences at the undergraduate level.

Furman first began investigating the possibility of establishing a chapter of the society in 1924, and for almost 50 years thereafter the university continued to submit inquiries or applications to the Council of United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa.

But each application failed. Among the reasons cited at various times by the national organization were concerns about the university's financial situation and disproportionate emphasis on vocational training, inadequate facilities, a disproportionate outlay of athletic grants-in-aid to academic scholarships, and Furman's failure to integrate. Only in 1950 did Furman's application even advance to the second stage of consideration.

These failures spurred President Gordon Blackwell, who took office in 1965, and Dean Francis W. Bonner to make securing a chapter a major goal for the university, and they pursued it with vigor. They realized that Furman's move to the new campus in the early 1960s had inspired rapid growth and improvement in Furman's academic programs and standards. In addition,

the university had rectified virtually all the problems that had previously stymied its efforts. By 1971 Furman was able to advance to the final stages of consideration.

Two members of the Phi Beta Kappa visiting committee came to the campus in late 1971, and in January 1973 a recommendation to award a chapter to the university was presented to the triennial council. However, before the final vote, several delegates to the council raised concerns about what they saw as denominational (Baptist) limitations on academic freedom, pointing to a specific clause that had been included in faculty contracts in 1941.

Furman responded that the clause in question had been deleted from recently revised faculty contracts. After several leading educators spoke strongly on behalf of the university and its support for academic freedom, the council voted to award Furman a chapter. The Gamma chapter became the third in South Carolina and the 214th in the nation.

On December 5, 1973, the chapter was installed at a ceremony presided over by noted historian John Hope Franklin, president of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa. Blackwell called it "the most significant event in the academic life of Furman."

The university's first members-in-course were initiated on April 23, 1974. Charles Hard Townes, Nobel Prize-winning physicist and member of the class of '35, was the first alumnus elected as an honorary member.

Club and was a Paul Harris Fellow.

**Lawrence Peter Hollis, Jr.** '46, March 21, High Point, N.C. He was sales manager for the Zonolite Division of W.R. Grace & Company for 40 years until his retirement in 1988. He was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II and was a Rotarian.

**John C. Cothran** '47, January 7, Greenville.

**Joseph William Bishop** '48, March 11, Spartanburg, S.C. He was a retired Baptist minister and had served several churches in the Upstate of South Carolina.

**Luther Z. Barnett** '49, May 19, Charleston, S.C.

**Jean Mosteller Cowart** '49, March 19, Greenwood, S.C. She was a retired unit manager for Tupperware.

**Roy Carlton Crowe** '49, February 26, Greenwood, S.C. He was a U.S. Army veteran.

**Joseph C. Pou** '49, March 31, Laurens, S.C. He was a minister.